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New In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program Provider Enrollment Process
CDSS Takes Proactive Steps to Prepare and Inform IHSS Providers of Specific Steps they Must Take to Remain in the Program

BACKGROUND

In order to ensure the integrity of the program and protect client safety, the 2009 Budget Act passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor included a significant anti-fraud initiative that included, among other things, a new IHSS provider enrollment process that contains four elements:

- 1) New provider enrollment form signed under penalty of perjury,
- 2) Providers would be fingerprinted and must pass a background check,
- 3) Providers must participate in a program orientation, and
- 4) Providers must sign a new provider form stating they understand IHSS program requirements.

Starting November 1, 2009, all new IHSS provider applicants are required to complete all four elements before being eligible to receive payment for services provided to IHSS recipients. Due to the large number of existing providers, the law allows any providers already working or applying to work prior to November 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010 to re-enroll in order to continue to receive payment from the IHSS program.

THE ISSUE

There are approximately 350,000 existing IHSS providers that must re-enroll through the new provider enrollment process. Litigation regarding which crimes would exclude providers delayed the ability to provide guidance to counties and IHSS Public Authorities. In addition, in order to implement the process to accomplish all this, counties had to work with other state agencies to obtain agreements and proper clearances for handling criminal record information. For these reasons, existing providers must begin at least one step of the new enrollment process through June 30, 2010 to continue being paid beyond that date. However, they must complete the entire new enrollment process no later than December 31, 2010.

As of June 2, 2009, approximately 330,000 new and existing IHSS providers have begun or completed the new enrollment process. Approximately 20,000 (or 6%) of existing IHSS providers have taken no action to comply with the new enrollment requirements. Extensive efforts have been undertaken by the State, counties, Public Authorities, and provider representative organizations to reach out to this remaining population and their recipient employers.

ACTION STEPS

In an effort to ensure all existing providers who choose to remain in the IHSS program have begun the new enrollment process, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), counties, Public Authorities, and provider representative organizations have taken the following actions to ensure the maximum number of providers are aware of and taking steps to re-enroll as a provider under the new requirements. CDSS and counties and Public Authorities continue to monitor provider enrollment progress.

- 1) In October 2009, all providers and recipients were mailed a letter informing them of changes to the IHSS program, including the new provider enrollment requirements.
- 2) Provider and recipient letters and payroll warrant messages were developed with stakeholder groups including counties, public authorities, legislative staff and advocates prior to dissemination to existing IHSS providers and IHSS recipients:
 - a. All payroll warrants, which are issued every other week, have included messages to all providers alerting them of the re-enrollment deadline. 25 counties have chosen specific county messages to their providers with phone numbers; the remaining counties have a statewide message telling them to contact the county or public authority if they have not begun the enrollment process prior to June 15, 2010.
 - b. Targeted letters to the remaining existing providers who have not begun any part of the process were mailed by CDSS between June 4 and June 8, 2010. The letter outlined the provider responsibility, key timeframes, specific steps to take and the consequences for not taking any action.
 - c. Targeted letters were sent to the recipients whose providers have not yet begun the process to explain that unless their provider begins the process of enrollment; their provider will no longer be eligible for payment by the IHSS program. Additionally they are told to contact the county and public authority if they need assistance finding a new provider before the deadline.
- 3) Twice a month CDSS has been supplying counties a list of every existing provider who has not yet started the process for them to reach out and make contact. Beginning in June, CDSS is providing weekly lists for counties.
- 4) CDSS shared a draft All-County Letter with stakeholders in May 2010 which outlines the re-enrollment requirement for existing providers and requires counties to update their IHSS provider payrolling system screens timely to ensure updated and accurate information. The letter also reminds counties and public authorities to be prepared to provide assistance to all recipients who may need a new provider as of July 1, 2010.
- 5) CDSS began calling all counties the end of May and the first week of June to offer any technical assistance or other support to help address the remaining provider population. All counties have indicated the IHSS provider payrolling system data is correct and they are working to ensure all information is entered timely.
- 6) Many counties have taken additional steps to call all the providers who have not yet started the process. As just one example, Los Angeles County is planning on calling recipients whose providers have not taken action.
- 7) CDSS has been in contact with IHSS Public Authorities who are working to ensure the registries they keep of approved IHSS providers are at capacity and able to respond to requests by IHSS recipients if such a need should arise.
- 8) Provider representative organizations have been sharing information with their memberships, including posting information and guidance on their Web sites.
- 9) CDSS issued a press release on June 15, 2010 to encourage IHSS providers to visit their county IHSS office to re-enroll in the program.

BY THE NUMBERS*

IHSS providers fully Enrolled in new process	225,073
IHSS providers who have begun the new process	104,267
IHSS providers who have not begun the new process	20,000
TOTAL	349,340

*As of June 9, 2010